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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turks React to Hudson Institute's 'Turkey Scenarios'
All papers over the weekend and today report on a "controversial" meeting held by the Hudson Institute in Washington on June 13 which discussed possible "crisis scenarios" in Turkey. Over the weekend, Turkish officials criticized the meeting because of its crisis scenarios such as the assassination of the head of the Constitutional Court and a PKK suicide attack which would kill 50 people in downtown Istanbul. The participants, including a Turkish military delegation visiting Washington, were asked whether the ruling AKP would lose votes or whether a Turkish military intervention in northern Iraq would cause the Erdogan government to lose its popularity in such probabilities. Papers report Kubat Talabani, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's son and the representative of the Kurdistan Regional Administration in Washington, was also present at the meeting. On Monday, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told Hurriyet that the Turkish generals attending the meeting should have walked out when the "disaster scenario" was raised. Prime Minister Erdogan commented on CNN Turk about the alleged scenarios, "I find it hard to understand whose interests are served by such scenarios. We are prepared to ensure that such scenarios do not materialize. Nevertheless, we have witnessed such scenarios recently." Weekend papers also reported Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) officials said such scenarios cannot be taken seriously.

Monday's papers report Ken Weinstein, the CEO of Hudson Institute, expressed regret that the details of an off-the-record meeting were given to the press, adding those who leaked it only aim to increase tension.

Editorial Commentary on Hudson Institute 'Turkey Meeting'
Semih Idiz observed in the mainstream daily Milliyet (6/18): "We should look for the reasons of the scenarios produced by the Hudson Institute, including the assassination of former Constitutional Court President Tugcu, a major PKK attack in Istanbul, or the Turkish military entering Northern Iraq, not in Washington but in

Turkey. Because when Turkey is observed from abroad, all that can be seen is state offices in conflict, and clashes in the domestic politics. These happenings prevent the achievement of consensus, which is vital for the country's strategic interests. Evaluating the meeting at the Hudson Institute, it is easy to say 'they went beyond their limits', however, it is not possible to obstruct such meetings because through this kind of brainstorming, Americans are trying to collect information on developments that could affect their strategic interests. Besides, it is a well known fact that other countries, including Turkey (in its military think tank organization SAREM), have such institutes to discuss such scenarios.

Actually, we should consider this scenario a useful way to reflect on the current political situation in Turkey. If there are such evaluations about Turkey, we should not blame Washington, but look to Ankara which gives such complicated signals on political developments."

Turkey Invites Iraqi PM to Discuss the PKK

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Turkey's Ambassador to Iraq, Derya Kanbay, conveyed a letter of invitation from Prime Minister Erdogan to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to visit Turkey and discuss PKK terrorism. The message also expressed support for Maliki's proposal to establish an economic and commercial committee between the two countries. Maliki reportedly emphasized willingness to prevent the PKK from operating in Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari told CNN-International in New York that Turkey's concerns over the PKK were legitimate. "Erdogan's statement that terrorism should first be dealt with inside Turkey encouraged us," Zebari is quoted as saying.

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General Pittard Warns the Kurds

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others report General Dana J. H. Pittard, working with the Iraqi forces on the Iraq-Turkey border, told The Washington Post that the Kurdish regional government "must help out in muzzling the PKK or suffer the consequences." The paper also quotes an unidentified Iraqi security official as saying the US needs to "pinch Barzani" to take a harder line against the PKK. The Iraqi border force does not have the power to stop Turkish troops from coming into Iraq or to keep the PKK terrorists from pushing out to Turkey, the official added.

AKP Delegation Fails to Secure US Support

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet on Saturday claimed a delegation of AKP MPs, Egemen Bagis, Reha Denemec and Mevlut Cavusoglu, in Washington last week for talks, failed to secure American support for the AKP before the July 22 elections. In Washington, Secretary Rice and State Department officials insist on continuing support for the AKP, while Pentagon bureaucrats and Jewish lobby groups believe the AKP should not be backed because of its close ties with Hamas and Hizbullah, according to Cumhuriyet.

Editorial Commentary on Palestine

Ferai Tinc commented in mainstream daily Hurriyet (6/18): "The ones who believed that peace could be established in the Middle East not by resolving the problems between Israel and Palestine, but by toppling Saddam, are mistaken once again. The US and Israel are preparing to help Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas who is seeking shelter in the West Bank. Would Hamas be elected today if the US had not ignored Abbas' calls for help to solve domestic issues after he was elected as President in 2005? Moreover, Abbas warned the US and Israel in 2006- when they pressured Palestine for elections - that Fatah would not be able to get the majority in the new Parliament, but no one listened to him. Now, Washington is planning to support an Abbas government in the West Bank by extending financial aid. Israel is still evaluating whether it could support Fatah against Hamas. Hamas has no plans to improve relations with Israel because their ideology is to destroy Israel some day and allow Palestinians to own Palestine. But could it be possible to establish a government in the West Bank without taking into consideration Hamas and 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza? The West

failed to help the moderate Palestinian leader Abbas in time."

TV News:

(NTV, 8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Three suspects have been arrested in connection with a percussion bomb blast that injured 14 people in Istanbul on June 10.
- The Turkish General Staff said Greek jetfighters intercepted Turkish military planes three times during training flights in international space over the Aegean.
- Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Guler holds contacts in Turkmenistan to review a deadlocked deal for the transportation of natural gas from the Caspian basin to world markets.
- Turkey is to buy the Boeing Co.-produced 51 Block II Tactical Harpoon missiles for USD 159 million.

International News

- Coalition forces commander General David Petraeus said Sunday US troop presence could be needed in Iraq for a decade to battle insurgents.
- An emergency government in Palestine has been sworn in by President Mahmoud Abbas.

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- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said the US runs the risk of creating new militias in Iraq if it arms Sunni Arab tribesmen indiscriminately to battle al-Qaida.
- British Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly is being actively touted by French president Sarkozy for the position of the EU's first full-time president.

WILSON